

victim IMPACT

A Newsletter to Advance Rights & Services for Crime Victims in Massachusetts

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September 11, 2001: Massachusetts Responds

By Karen Dempsey and Stefanie Fleischer Seldin

The events of September 11 and their aftermath have challenged service providers across the country to develop an unprecedented response. Crisis responders, victim service professionals, community leaders and individuals have focused on helping, even while

shouldering their everyday responsibilities and their own grief and fear. The care and commitment witnessed in our community alone is immeasurable. In the weeks following the terrorist attacks, Massachusetts providers stepped forward to help in myriad ways: providers went to Logan airport to offer immediate crisis services for victims' families; some visited schools in their communities to help teachers talk with students; others commuted long distances, to help affected families living far from homicide bereavement programs; still others juggled personal and professional commitments to travel to New York and New Jersey and support efforts in those states.

As our community continues to help people affected by these events, it is important that we reflect on, and share with others, the steps taken and lessons learned. Information sharing and collaboration have never been more critical. In the coming months, MOVA will continue to share with you our office's

and our colleagues' efforts to support the response. Each day, it seems, we are reminded of the skill and dedication of our colleagues in the field as we learn of new initiatives and forge new partnerships to better serve our communities. MOVA and the Victim and Witness Assistance Board encourage providers working in the field to share their stories with us, so that we may all continue to learn from and support one another in this challenging new time.

The Response at MOVA

MOVA's response began early on the morning of September 12 as the MOVA staff gathered for an emergency meeting to plan our first steps. The meeting also allowed staff an opportunity to discuss the events and our personal reactions. Sandra Clark, Deputy Director of the Attorney General's Office Crime Victim Compensation Division, attended the meeting on behalf of her office, both to collaborate with MOVA staff and to inform staff of Attorney

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Victim IMPACT

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A Letter from the Director

On the morning of September 11, 2001, the MOVA staff was scheduled to hold a training for programs who received funding to provide services to victims of violent crime. Like so many that morning, we were busy preparing for the work day ahead, never fathoming the devastation that was to come.

While MOVA's mission has always been to help those who have been victimized by violence, for so many of us, the events of September 11 have redefined what that commitment means. The magnitude of the crisis—the immeasurable grief and profound distress of losing so many innocent lives at once—demanded a fundamentally different level of response.

I am enormously proud of all the work that the MOVA staff has done in the past few months to respond to the crisis. Much of that work by MOVA and others is chronicled in this edition of *Victim Impact*. As I leave my position as the Executive Director at MOVA, I am confident that the team we have assembled will continue to serve victims at this high level and to bring the cause of victim rights to the next level.

Hundreds of Massachusetts families lost loved ones on September 11, but hundreds of other families across the state also lost loved ones to violence this year. Their cases do not have the same visibility, but the pain of their losses and the attendant hardships are equally unbearable. The overwhelming outpouring of care, generosity and support from both the government and the public in the wake of the September 11 attacks underscores all that needs to be done for those who lose loved ones through criminal acts everyday. While we have made much progress, that remains our challenge.

It has been an honor to serve as MOVA's Executive Director for the past three years. Thank you for everything, and keep up all your great work.

Best wishes,



Shelagh Moskow

person

First Person:

Between the Towers

By Donna Fournier Cuomo

On September 11, 2001, when the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center (WTC) in New York came crashing down in a terrorist attack of immense proportions, my husband Bob and I narrowly escaped the fire, smoke, and debris. Haunted by the memories of the people we met there and who may now be dead, we keep going over the surreal events of that tragic morning.

Bob, who is a principal for DRI-WEFA, an economics consulting firm, was giving a presentation at the National Association for Business Economics on the first floor of the Marriott Hotel located between the WTC Twin Towers. At 8:48 a.m., the building shook. Debris began falling from the ceiling and people started running out of the conference room—it was pandemonium. Bob helped six people who had been trampled by the crowd. No one knew that the first plane, American Airlines Flight 11, had just struck the WTC North Tower. At the same time, I heard a loud noise and something hitting the window of our hotel room on the 15th floor. When I looked out, I saw smoldering papers falling from the sky and fire and smoke billowing out of the North Tower. On the ground, people were racing out of the hotel onto the plaza between the two towers while fire darted all around. At that point, I had to get down to the lobby as quickly as possible.

As everyone began leaving the hotel, Bob waited frantically for me as droves of people began appearing from the stairwells. The firefighters could not let him go upstairs to find me. Hampered by recent foot surgery, I started struggling down the stairs. A man came up behind me who I offered to let go ahead. He declined, which helped me move as fast as possible. As the crowds of hotel guests dwindled to a handful, Bob convinced a firefighter to begin climbing the stairs. At just that time, I made it to the top of the staircase that led to the lobby. Little did we know the horror that lay ahead—and that the worst of our ordeal was yet to come.

A second plane, United Airlines Flight 175, had just hit the WTC South Tower. Due to falling debris, the Marriott staff told us we couldn't leave the building until the firefighters could escort us out. Several minutes later, we were directed by the firefighters to exit the hotel. Once we were on the street, the firefighters began yelling, "Run! Don't look up! Run!" Just then, I tripped over a large piece of twisted metal that had fallen and badly bruised my chin and left foot and cut both knees. Bob quickly helped me up and we continued down the Joe DiMaggio Highway. Along the route were signs of the devastation. We saw a wheel from one of the planes, an abandoned car that had slammed into a storefront, and body parts including an arm strewn along the sidewalk. As we made our escape, shopkeepers, firefighters, and police remained behind.

When we got a few blocks away, we stopped to catch our breath. People were in shock and questioning whether the South Tower would topple over. After we crossed under the overpass to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel onto Broadway, suddenly a wave of black smoke and ash engulfed the street outside. The South Tower had collapsed. People were running for cover. We went into an office building, where the air quality in the lobby soon became very poor. The building security gave masks to everyone, and urged people to go up to the offices. I kept thinking we should be going underground. With few options left, we took the elevator to the 18th floor with employees of Fleet Financial Services. Meanwhile, our son Mark and daughter Rachel watched television in horror as the South Tower collapsed on what was once the WTC Marriott Hotel. Shortly thereafter, fortunately, Fleet Financial let us use the telephone to call our son Mark.

Within minutes, a second wave of black smoke and ash engulfed the area. The WTC North Tower had just collapsed. It was like a

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The Federal Investigation

Responding to Victims of Terrorism

By U.S. Attorney Michael Sullivan

The acts of terrorism perpetrated on September 11 presented unprecedented challenges for victim service professionals at all levels of government. The number of victims in need of assistance required government agencies and voluntary service organizations to respond in untraditional ways and to make policy decisions at lightning speed. Valuable lessons have been learned during the past months by those responsible for the coordination and delivery of services to victims.

Role of the Department of Justice

Countless individuals, agencies and organizations at the federal, state and local level are participants in the ongoing effort to assist the victims of September 11. Recognizing that a tragedy of this magnitude requires the collaboration of many agencies, the Department of Justice plays a unique role in responding to terrorism victims.

Acts of terrorism are federal crimes, which are investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Offices. The FBI, U.S. Attorney's Office and the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) are all part of the U.S. Department of Justice. OVC is the training, technical assistance and grant-making agency within the Department of Justice for victim assistance issues.

By federal law (42 U.S.C. §10606 and §10607), the FBI and U.S. Attorney's Office have mandatory responsibilities concerning victims of crime. The agen-

cies must identify the victims of the federal crime; notify victims of their rights and available medical and support services; and notify victims of the status of the investigation and prosecution, to the extent it is appropriate to inform the victims and to the extent that it will not interfere with the investigation.

The September 11 Response

On September 11, immediately following the plane crashes, the FBI Boston Office provided an initial briefing to victims' families at the assistance center set up by the airlines at the Hilton Hotel at Logan Airport. Sue Durkin, Victim Assistance Coordinator at the FBI, has been instrumental in assisting family members since the first day of the tragedy. She was at the family assistance center at the Hilton Hotel and worked with the two-person care teams assigned by the airlines to each family of the American Flight 11 and United Flight 175 passengers. Sue's contact with victims' families continues to date.

Also on September 11, U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft announced the establishment of the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) Victim Assistance Center and its toll-free number. This Department of Justice assistance center, staffed by trained mental health professionals, was implemented to provide crisis counseling; to obtain identifying information about individual victims and contact information for future notification about benefits, services, and criminal justice proceedings; and to make referrals for services. OVC also made emergency travel and lodging funds available to those victims not eligible for similar assistance from the airlines. OVC's web site, www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/vfa/, contains excellent resource information on assisting victims of terrorism.

On October 13, the FBI and the U.S. Attorney's Office convened a family assistance meeting for the victims' immediate family members residing in Massachusetts. Several families residing in New Hampshire and Rhode Island were also invited because the FBI Boston Office has jurisdiction in those states. Almost all of the families invited were families of the victims on American Flight 11 and United Flight 175, the two flights that departed from Logan Airport. At the time the meeting was arranged, not all victims' names were known to the FBI. Although several toll-free numbers had been established by different entities to obtain information on missing persons, no single agency had a complete, verified, list of all victims of the September 11 terrorist acts. Additional victims' names were obtained after the October 13th meeting, and outreach efforts were made to those families.

At the family assistance meeting, information was provided on the crime victim compensation programs, including the Massachusetts and New York State programs and the new federal compensation fund. (On December 21, 2001, the Interim Final Rule on the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund of 2001 was published in the Federal Register. Comments on this notice are due by January 22. Information on this fund is available at www.usdoj.gov/victimcompensation/.) Families attending the meeting also heard from the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance (MOVA) on homicide bereavement services available across the state, and learned about services and resources available through OVC Victim Assistance Center, the Attorney General's Victim Compensation Program, the Red Cross

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The Family Service Center

By Jennifer Wilson

Jennifer Wilson is a Victim Advocate in the Victim Compensation & Assistance Division of the Office of Attorney General Tom Reilly. She spent the second week of October in New York City working for the New York Crime Victim Board (New York's Victim Compensation Program) at the Family Service Center, assisting family members of victims and survivors of the attack on the World Trade Center.

The Family Service Center (FSC) is an impressive coordination of federal, state, city, and social service agencies. It is a warehouse in mid-town Manhattan that was transformed into a center of information and support, where families of victims and survivors of the September 11 attacks can access a wide range of services, including financial assistance, legal assistance and crisis counseling.

It's very difficult to describe the atmosphere of the FSC. It was filled with many people who were directly affected by the terrorism. They had either lost a family member, witnessed the destruction of the World Trade Center (WTC) from other buildings or the street level, or were directly in the midst of the attack and survived. The Family Service Center was guarded by the NYPD, State Police, Marines and National Guard. I went through three checkpoints every day to get into the FSC, and no one was allowed to take pictures in or around the building. Even the food being delivered to the cafeterias was checked. On my last day, there was an emergency evacuation of the entire FSC because of an unattended bag.

Inside, there were signs everywhere of comfort and support. Red carpet and hanging curtains transformed a huge sterile warehouse into 150 cubicles with desks, computers and phones. The cubi-

cles were filled with representatives from the companies at the WTC, lawyers to help with death certificates and other legal issues, local and federal law enforcement officials, staff from the Red Cross, Victim Compensation and Safe Passage (an independent victim assistance agency). A memory wall held photos of the people killed and messages from their families and loved ones. Leaning up against the wall were hundreds of bears sent from the people of Oklahoma.

Triage stations provided maps and checklists to help survivors and families access all of the appropriate services. The Red Cross set up two cafeterias, one for families and the other for workers, where they served food all day. Red Cross workers also brought around carts of snacks and drinks to the cubicles, which helped the people that were too traumatized to remember to eat or drink. Therapy dogs walked around with their owners, providing comfort for children and adults. Fresh flowers were all around, as were drawings of hope and support from children all across the U.S. Mental health workers from Red Cross and religious leaders had private areas to meet with people, and also walked around the FSC, offering support and crisis intervention to families, survivors and volunteers. There were phones and computers for families to use, and at least 20 language interpreters, as well as a massage station.

While I was there, I worked 12-hour days, helping families, survivors and witnesses file for Victim Compensation. People shared with me photos and the flyers they had made when looking for their loved ones. The photos were from happy times, like weddings, vacations and graduations, and it was overwhelm-

ing to see so much life and potential gone. The documentation that was needed seemed so personal—photo IDs, marriage licenses, death certificate applications, tax statements. People told me how much they loved their husband, wife, sister, brother, how strongly he or she believed in God, what a good wife or mother or husband or father this person was, their plans for the future. They cried and told me funny stories and special, unique characteristics about their loved ones. They told me of the last conversation or the last time they saw their loved one.

I also met with people who were working in and around the WTC on September 11 and survived. The second person I spoke to was a man who worked right at the base of the WTC. He sat down and told me everything he went through in order to escape, every thought he had, every conversation he had with God, every sound, smell and taste he felt. He didn't need to tell me this in order to access financial assistance, he just needed to tell me, to reassure himself that he was alive and that he had survived. Many survivors cried. They told me of their friends who died in the buildings, their fears of going back to work, their need to support families, their inability to sleep or eat. Many had inhaled dust and debris and jet oil on that day, and suffered from asthma attacks or were having lung problems.

I feel incredibly lucky that I was able to assist in New York. The support of my family, friends and co-workers was so helpful and essential to my work there. I was amazed and touched by the people that I met in New York, and will carry their faces and stories with me forever.

*We gain strength, and
courage, and confidence
by each experience in
which we really stop to
look fear in the face....
we must do that which
we think we cannot.*

-Eleanor Roosevelt

Tuition Waivers Offered to September 11 Victims

The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education amended its guidelines to allow tuition waivers for children and spouses of Massachusetts residents directly affected by the September 11 attacks. Victims' children and spouses now qualify for tuition waivers for courses at any public college or university in the state. The waivers apply to courses taken for undergraduate credit as well as for certificate programs and noncredit programs.

Federal Victim Compensation Fund Opens Boston Office

The U.S. Department of Justice opened a Massachusetts office for New England families applying to the federal September 11th Victim Compensation Fund. The office is located at 160 Federal Street in Boston. Senator Edward M. Kennedy and Representative Martin Meehan requested a Massachusetts branch of the office in a letter to the fund's Director, Kenneth Feinberg, after learning of local families' difficulties in obtaining information about the fund. Congress established the fund to assist victims and family members affected by the September 11 attacks.

Swift Approves Anti-terror Funds

Acting Governor Jane Swift signed a \$26 million supplemental terrorism budget, with most of the money going to the State Police for overtime pay, new recruits and equipment, including gas masks, helmets and other specialized gear. In the six weeks following September 11, overtime costs for troopers exceeded \$2 million for terrorism-related duties, alone, as troopers guarded Logan International Airport, bridges, tunnels, reservoirs and other potential targets. The budget also allotted close to \$600,000 for security improvements to the State House, including the installation of metal detectors for the first time in the building's history.

Logan Tests Facial-recognition Systems

Logan Airport began testing facial-recognition systems at two security checkpoints, becoming one of the first in the nation to install the cutting-edge, controversial technology, officials announced. The computers will compare the facial characteristics of travelers, airport employees, and flight crew members who pass through the checkpoints to those on FBI watch lists. The systems have met criticism from civil liberties advocates in the past.

Task Force Launched; Anti-Terrorism Coordinator Appointed

Massachusetts launched an Anti-Terrorism Task Force (ATTF) of executive-level officials from all state and federal law enforcement agencies in the Commonwealth. The ATTF will act as the standing body in the state for state and federal anti-terrorism efforts. The ATTF co-chair, U.S. Attorney Michael Sullivan, named Jerry Leone as the state's Anti-Terrorism Coordinator. Leone served previously as Chief of the Criminal Bureau in the office of Attorney General Tom Reilly. A Presidential Executive Order and U.S. Attorney General Directive issued in response to September 11 called for such initiatives in all federal Department of Justice Districts.

New Jersey Enacts Terrorism Assistance Act of 2001

Acting Governor Donald T. DiFrancesco signed into law the New Jersey Terrorism Assistance Act of 2001. The new law expedites payment of state benefits, upon recommendation of a state agency, to those who suffered personal injury, death, loss of a family member, loss of or damage to real or personal property, or business interruption as a result of the September 11 terrorist attacks. Benefits include temporary disability, workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, state health or retirement benefits.

Maryland, Montana Improve Interagency Communications

Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend announced a \$400,000 grant to begin work on a wireless, single-frequency communications link for federal, state and local emergency responders that will eventually be used statewide. Montana state officials are also implementing a new uniform-frequency radio system to streamline communications among federal, state, and local emergency and public safety teams in the event of an attack or major catastrophe. That system is expected to cost as much as \$150 million to install and operate.

Embassy Bombing Terrorists Ordered to Pay Restitution

Four terrorists convicted of the 1998 American Embassy bombings in Africa were ordered to pay restitution to their victims. A federal judge in Manhattan ordered payments that would amount to approximately \$33 million. Though none of the four terrorists are known to have assets, prosecutors held that the order would ensure that money earned in the future, such as by writing a book about the events, would go to victims of the bombings.

APA Joins Employers to Combat Workplace Stress

The American Psychiatric Association together with leading employers launched the National Partnership for Workplace Mental Health to combat the mental health impact of terrorism, disaster and economic uncertainty in the workplace. The 14-member partnership will provide employers nationwide with a first-response capability, including educational materials, training and other tools, to meet the mental health needs of their employees. Founding members include the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Center for Mental Health Services, Constellation Energy, Delta Air Lines, Dow Chemical, DuPont, GlaxoSmithKline, Hughes Electronics, IBP, Merrill Lynch, National Association of Manufacturers, The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., and UnumProvident Corporation.

D.C. Homicides Surge after September 11

The District of Columbia experienced a dramatic increase in violent crime after the September 11 terrorist attacks, the *Washington Post* reported. Fifty-three homicides occurred in the district in the eight weeks following the September 11 attacks, a third more than the same period last year. D.C. Police Chief Charles H. Ramsey said the increase in violent crimes could be linked to the redeployment of the district's 3,600-member police force to help with other security duties. Ramsey said that Philadelphia, Baltimore and Chicago also saw crime surge after September 11.

Americans Report Stress Responses to Attacks

Nine of every 10 American adults showed clinical signs of stress the weekend after the terrorist strikes of September 11, the *New England Journal of Medicine* reported. Nearly half of all adults—44%—reported at least one symptom of substantial stress, such as being extremely upset when something reminded them of the tragedy, having difficulty sleeping or having uncalled-for outbursts of anger. Extensive television viewing was associated with a substantial stress reaction. The study also found that more than one-third of children reported such stress symptoms as nightmares and fearing for their safety.



Voices from the Field

The Massachusetts Team in New York

On the morning of September 11, Katherine Manners and Janet Fine were meeting over coffee when they noticed a crowd gathering around a TV set. "What are you looking at?" Katherine inquired of another patron. The answer came, "A plane just flew into the World Trade Center." They joined the crowd, confused about how pilot error could ever have been so precise. Within minutes, they got their answer as they watched the second plane strike, knowing immediately that this was an act of terrorism and large-scale murder.

One month later, almost to the day, Janet and Katherine were again having coffee together. This time, they were on an Amtrak train bound for New York City, joined by eight colleagues from a variety of victim service organizations. These ten women, most meeting for the first time, were the quickly assembled Massachusetts Team called in for a crisis response by the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA).

As we ten got to know one another, our conversations were a mix of nervous laughter and quiet reflection about the challenge that lay ahead. Information about our role and responsibilities was sparse. We knew we were going to provide group crisis intervention services for staff of children's services agencies. We could not know the extent of the physical devastation we would encounter and the vast emotional trauma that shrouded lower Manhattan and beyond.

"I still find it hard to put words to the experience. In some way that inability is what I am most struck by. I am beginning to realize that I have been holding my breath...waiting for the next terrible event/catastrophe so that I don't yet feel that I have the emotional perspective to untangle my thoughts and feelings about our work in NYC. If I am feeling this way I can only imagine how those who were directly affected feel. I worry about all the people who did not receive crisis services but who had to return to work, to make their lives work once again. I feel good about what we contributed but am all too aware of what needs to be done. I hope that services continue to be made available and that we may need to be creative in designing services for those who are typically underserved."

We were struck immediately upon arrival with the images, sounds and smells of a wounded city. Our hotel looked out on the National Guard Armory that had been used as a triage center for families searching for their lost loved ones. Every square inch of that building was covered with posters of the lost. These posters told the story of the absolute desperation of the surviving family members. They carried photos, messages and excruciating

details: hair color, height, weight, office location, clothing worn that day, even down to the color of their nail polish. As we walked the streets we noted how every conversation overheard centered around who was attending which funeral or memorial service. People seemed to speak incessantly of their experiences, trying to explain the inexplicable. We noticed a marked reaction in pedestrians to the sounds of sirens in the streets and airplanes overhead. And there was the acrid smell, most intense at Ground Zero, but pervasive throughout lower Manhattan. Even amidst this devastation, there was an amazing generosity of spirit. Everyone noticed the kindness and care expressed by strangers and friends alike.

"Everywhere we turned there seemed to be another facet to the tragedy that I hadn't considered. The employees we met who were witnesses had lost so much that day, the people who lost jobs, officemates. Reading those posters outside the hotel struck me—the impact was so powerful when you could walk down a whole city block and read them, story after story, every version of heartache you could imagine. I just was not prepared for that. I knew many people were lost, but so many who are left behind, grieving or fearing for their safety, those people were countless. I got a sense of the enormity when we went to the fire station and there were pictures of 18 guys lost in that station, and the firemen were tearing up and I tried to imagine how a human being endures that kind of loss, friend after friend, funeral after funeral, like it would never end. I never slept in NY. I couldn't stop my mind from reeling over the incomprehensible layers of loss. I know human beings have suffered like this before, but being there to witness it gave the story a scale I had never imagined."

The evening of our arrival, we were briefed about our responsibilities for the week. We were to lead several group crisis interventions for the staff of a Children's Services organization located in very close proximity to the World Trade Center. We would also staff the Family Assistance Center in Liberty Park, New Jersey. The next morning, several of us went off to the Children's Services offices for a group intervention of witnesses and victims who had survived. Most participants had witnessed the planes crashing into the buildings, people jumping from windows and individuals' injuries and burns. Many had been caught in the collapse of the towers and had run for their lives as they were consumed by the smoke, dust and falling debris. They reported being separated from their coworkers, unable to see where they were running, unable to breathe, all the while thinking that this was the end of their lives and, from some descriptions, the end of the world.

"As I stood at Ground Zero with some of our fellow team members, looking at the horrific devastation at the World Trade Center, I remember thinking that even in person, this disaster still seemed unimaginable. It could not and did not sink in. The reality of the aftermath quickly became clear, however, in our bearing witness to individuals in our groups recounting their terrifying and profoundly traumatic experiences. My decision to go to NY as part of this crisis response team was reaffirmed by the incredible amount of strength of the human spirit that was palpable in each of our groups. I was struck by the ways in which people were able to connect, support and console, and even, at times, laugh with one another. I was also moved by the intensity of people's faith despite the unthinkable horror, terror, and loss they experienced, and were continuing

to experience. It was an honor and a privilege to do this work and extremely enriching and comforting to do it with such an outstanding and talented group of professionals."

Those of us who went to Liberty Park found a "one stop shop" for those affected by the acts of terrorism. Surviving family members could obtain a death certificate, change car registration, apply for financial assistance and receive crisis counseling among other services. Our role was to serve as "companions" to the families who came in for these services. We helped with the morass of required paperwork and gently guided them to the comfort spaces set up by the Red Cross for a break when it became too much for them to handle. Comfort food was plentiful. Pet therapy was offered to the survivors and workers alike. A memorial wall for individuals to write messages to their lost loved ones snaked through the center of the abandoned train station that had been occupied for this purpose.

"Something that stands out for me is the deep compassion consistently felt and expressed by all the volunteer workers at the Liberty Park Family Assistance Center—not only for the victims and families whom they served, but also for each other. Love for their fellow human beings permeated the atmosphere at Liberty Park. As a victim said to me, 'This place is like one huge heart.'"

"The shame and embarrassment of the WTC employees who had lost their jobs and required assistance.... They expressed that they were still alive, and it was extremely difficult for them to ask for anything, even though most of them had used up most of their savings before coming to the assistance center."

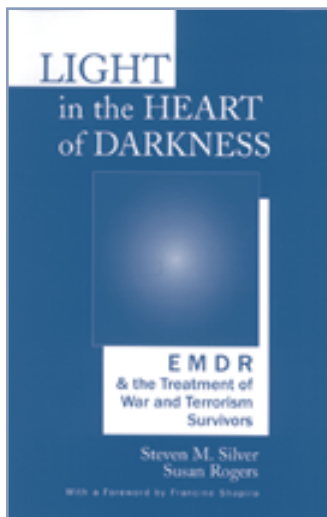
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Light in the Heart of Darkness

Written by Steven M. Silver, Ph.D.
and Susan Rogers, Ph.D.

EMDR and the Treatment of War and Terrorism Survivors

Reviewed by Kevin Becker, Psy.D.



In the aftermath of the attacks on the United States on September 11, there is certainly no better time for a book that addresses the treatment of terrorism survivors. Over the next several years there will be an unprecedented need for effective mental health interventions for the treatment of trauma-related symptoms resulting from terrorist assaults. With years of experience in the Veterans Administration, authors Steven M. Silver, Ph.D., and Susan Rogers, Ph.D., know very well the lasting impact of war and the long-term outcome for those traumatized by terrorism and war. This book outlines how they have used their additional training in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) in the treatment of terrorism survivors with great success. However, as someone who has advanced training in EMDR and treats a wide variety of trauma survivors, I had a mixed reaction to the book.

"By their very nature, war and terrorism are designed to impact not just on individuals, but whole societies and cultures. Therapists trying to work with survivors of these events often have to deal with institutions, political forces, and a variety of other elements external to the client and often contributing to the severity of the situation."

I was eager to read further as I read the authors' description of the book as "a specialist volume in a library built around Shapiro's 1995 text." For those who don't know, Dr. Francine Shapiro developed the original protocol for EMDR. Nevertheless I was only partially satisfied as I continued to read on only to find less new information than I had hoped for. While there is much to learn from this volume and many important issues are addressed, it fell somewhat short of the "specialist volume" it is purported to be. However what this means in part is that there is a broader audience for this book than the authors perhaps intended.

I disagree with the authors' assumption that "Trauma resulting from the experiences of war and terrorism differs in degree from that typically encountered in civilian trauma in a number of ways." Many individuals live in constant fear in their own homes as a result of chronic abuse or domestic violence. In my experience, the trauma experienced by war and terrorism survivors is no more intense or debilitating than these forms of "typical...civilian trauma". Many of the clinical issues raised in this book are not unique to war and terrorism survivors, and consequently clinicians who are working with other types of multiply traumatized individuals will recognize their clients' dilemmas in this volume.

Of particular interest in this book is the chapter which focuses on therapist training and self-care. In this thorough, well thought out chapter Silver and Rogers point out that not all therapists should be doing trauma work and some should be directed toward other areas of specialization. Their attention to the special self-care and training required

First Person Between the Towers

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of therapists doing relief-team work in war and disaster zones is also uniquely informative and valuable.

Important clinical tools in this volume include a discussion of the use and misuse of abreaction in the treatment of trauma survivors and a well-designed EMDR protocol for dealing with recent and ongoing traumatic events. Each of these chapters will have immediate applicability for most EMDR clinicians.

Overall, while this volume is not as specialized as I had hoped it would be, the end result is that it will find broader use than even the authors anticipated.

Kevin Becker, Psy.D., is Director of The Trauma Center, a program of Arbour Health Systems.

Further Reading

For a discussion of Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) treatment, see 'EMDR Offers Hope: an Effective Treatment for Trauma,' by Roslin Moore, Ph.D., (*Victim Impact*, Volume 2, No. 1).

volcanic eruption, and the intensity was so great that it affected the air quality on the 18th floor. Since the effects outside were even worse, everyone remained in the building for over two hours before security began allowing people to leave.

Some people decided to take the ferry to New Jersey, while others walked over the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges. Bob and I were the last ones to leave, and when we got outside onto the street, the heavy soot, which covered everything, was blowing in our eyes. We used the masks and began walking toward the river. Very few people were on the streets, however, we met many police officers sent to New York to help with the evacuation. Since the subway was running in some parts of the city, we decided to try to get to Penn Station to get a train to Boston. First, we had to walk to the lower East Side, making a horseshoe loop along the East River into Chinatown. For what seemed like forever, we walked—past the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges until we reached a working subway station. With few options, we took the subway and continued on to Penn Station.

Upon arriving at Penn Station at 4:30 p.m., we found all the shops closed as well as the Amtrak ticket booths. Two personnel at an information counter said an Acela train was due to arrive from Washington D.C. It was delayed, and they didn't know when it would be there. They said we wouldn't need a ticket to board. At 5:45 P.M. almost without warning, they announced the arrival of the Acela train. Eventually, we all were allowed to board, and finally at 6:00 p.m. the train pulled out of New York City for Boston.

At one point as the train moved away, everyone looked out the window to see the smoldering fire and smoke of the WTC in the distance. It was hard to imagine that a few hours earlier we were at the WTC with thousands of others who were alive and well, going to work, but now were dead. When we arrived at South Station, our family was there to meet us.

In the days following September 11th, I have gone over the events of that fateful day. I am haunted by the faces of the people we met at the WTC as well as the firefighters and police officers who helped us to safety. I oftentimes wonder if they are alive or dead. Feelings of anger at the terrorists and sadness for the thousands of victims who lost their lives remain immense. Concern for the families of the victims comes from knowing first-hand what it means when someone you love is murdered. In 1974, my seventeen-year-old brother Joey, a high school student, was murdered while working part-time at a gas station in Lawrence.

For each murder victim, there are several homicide survivors left behind, someone's child, mother, father, wife, husband, brother or sister. The shock, anger, and indescribable grief that each survivor will endure is overwhelming. It is a challenge to all of us to meet the needs of the families and help ease the pain of those survivors who live in Massachusetts. To meet this challenge will require a resolve and sense of purpose that is unprecedented.

Donna Fournier Cuomo, the Deputy Director of the Executive Office of Public Safety Programs Division, served previously in the Massachusetts House of Representatives. She is the founder of The Joey Fournier Services, a victim support and violence prevention organization named in memory of her seventeen year-old brother Joey, a high school student murdered in 1974.

General Tom Reilly's decision to extend state victim compensation eligibility to any survivors of family members lost on the two planes originating at Logan airport.

MOVA's initial focus was three-fold: outreach to victims and the larger community, support to service providers, and collaboration with other agencies. The VOCA team, which administers Victims of Crime Act funds for Massachusetts programs, began immediate outreach to the VOCA-funded programs across the state that provide community crisis and homicide bereavement services. Many of these programs had already increased their availability to the community with extended hotline and walk-in hours, and the VOCA team developed a list of those agencies, organized by region, which detailed services available and how to access them.

At the request of the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA), MOVA brought together a team of experts in crisis response to

go to New York for a week in early October. MOVA's Family Violence Project/SAFEPLAN Manager joined nine others to create a team of professionals with extensive training and experience in community crisis and trauma response.

The team led community crisis response interventions, based on the NOVA model, for groups of witnesses and survivors. Many of these interventions were for professionals and support staff whose offices were located very near the site of the World Trade Center. The team also worked at the New Jersey Family Assistance Center at Liberty State Park, located directly across the water from the WTC. The team assisted family members there who had lost loved ones at the disaster site as well as survivors who had lost their jobs due to the events of September 11.

Outreach to the Massachusetts Community

MOVA's Community Education Coordinator developed the VOCA program information into a media advisory

and distributed it widely to radio, television and print media. The office's Victim Services Coordinator shared the information with other providers and potential points of contact for people seeking services including the airlines, the American Red Cross, the United Way, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, MASSPORT, the National Organization for Victim Assistance, the National Center for Victims of Crime, the U.S. Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime, the local FBI Victim Witness Program, and state and District Attorney-based victim witness assistance programs. MOVA continues to be in contact with representatives from those agencies, sharing information and accepting referrals for services.

To assist us with community outreach, Mary Jane Medved, designer of our newsletter and office brochures, donated her time and skills to create an advertisement for print media. The *Boston Herald* generously contributed space on its pages, running the ad twice for free. MOVA purchased space in the *Boston Globe*, and boston.com, the *Globe's* homepage, donated a week of banner ads linking to our media advisory.

Outreach to the Families

MOVA staff members had opportunities to meet directly with the Massachusetts families who lost loved ones on September 11 through the efforts of local investigators and members of Congress. Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Representative Martin Meehan, and local offices of the FBI and U.S. Attorney's Office held meetings with the families in September and October in an effort to share information about available services and hear from the families on their immediate needs.



Memorial to the Victims of September 11, Davis Square, Somerville, MA – D. Arcidiacono

Congressman Meehan, whose district alone lost 26 people, brought together representatives from MOVA, the Attorney General's Victim Compensation Division, the FBI and the Social Security Administration as well as a civil attorney and an accountant to talk with families about meeting their needs. Over fifty family members attended the meeting.

On Saturday, October 13, the FBI and U.S. Attorney's Office held a briefing at the Federal Courthouse in Boston and invited MOVA to attend and again present on available services, along with the Attorney General's Victim Compensation Program, the Red Cross and other service providers. Over 100 family members attended the briefing.

The following Friday, October 19, Senator Kennedy's Office held a meeting with approximately 150 family members at the Park Plaza Hotel in Boston. Many providers and agencies attended, including the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Massachusetts Department of Revenue and the American Trial Lawyers Association. After hearing presentations from the Senator and others, family members had a chance to visit tables set up by providers and access information directly. These meetings allowed MOVA staff to present information about the victim assistance services available through our office and VOCA-funded programs, and also to speak to family members one-on-one about their issues and concerns.

Funding Advocacy for Providers

Through MOVA's immediate outreach to VOCA programs it was clear that programs, already stretched to capacity, would log tremendous overtime hours

responding to their communities' needs in the aftermath of September 11. Without hesitation, providers had already extended service hours with hotlines, walk-in services, and drop-in support groups—with no assurance that they would be paid.

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) within the U.S. Department of Justice first encouraged MOVA to send a funding request for needy VOCA programs. MOVA responded quickly. When funding from OVC was not forthcoming, however, OVC suggested we contact the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH), the local pass-through agency of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Starting on September 12, MOVA's Policy Analyst was in almost daily contact with staff of the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation, urging them to advocate for supplemental money for the VOCA grantees providing homicide survivor and crisis counseling services. MOVA was successful in rallying the entire Congressional Delegation to sign a letter to U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft. MOVA's Policy Analyst also spoke to U.S. Attorney Michael Sullivan and asked for his assistance. He agreed to reach out to John Gillis, the Director of OVC, and Attorney General Ashcroft and communicate Massachusetts' need for a portion of the \$40 billion in federal emergency supplemental funding appropriated by Congress immediately after the September 11 attacks.

At MOVA's request, Senator Kennedy's Boston office staff spoke to Governor Swift's Deputy Chief of Staff, Stacey Rainey, who promised to help. The Governor's Washington, D.C. office also offered to reach out to officials within

the Bush Administration. Finally, the Massachusetts Delegation wrote Congressional appropriators to urge them to fund OVC and specifically to direct funding to supplemental grant requests for community crisis response and homicide bereavement programs that are dealing with the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks. The Bush Administration has requested that \$68.1 million of the \$40 billion go to the Crime Victims Fund to support VOCA programs.

In the coming weeks, MOVA will continue to monitor what Congress intends to do with the \$40 billion and will urge the Delegation and other Massachusetts officials to remain involved. We did receive a positive response from the Director of OVC, who wrote to MOVA: *"It appears that we will be able to provide direct funding to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts from this emergency appropriation."*

VOCA/DMH Funding Partnership

On October 23, members of the MOVA staff met with Senator Kennedy's staff to discuss services for families of the September 11 victims. Senator Kennedy himself had contacted each of the Massachusetts families personally, and families in turn called his office with requests for assistance. His staff had established the most comprehensive list of Massachusetts victims, and through ongoing contact with families, had an understanding of their needs. Based on conversations with families by telephone and at the October 19 meeting, Senator Kennedy's staff believed that families needed grief counselors who could also assist them through the different systems and resources that they would now need to access.

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Since MOVA had begun to pursue a collaboration with DMH to fund VOCA programs, we suggested to Senator Kennedy's staff that DMH be brought into discussions of how to best serve the families. DMH quickly agreed to reorganize an October 26 training to include VOCA providers. With assistance from Senator Kennedy's office, various providers and entitlement programs were brought in to discuss services available for September 11 victims' families. Bette Spear, of Omega, trained attendees on issues related to homicide bereavement.

Three VOCA-funded homicide bereavement programs received funds through DMH's FEMA grant for the first 60 days after September 11. After the first 60 days, additional VOCA programs are eligible for FEMA's nine-month regular services grant. To date, it is uncertain that this funding will come through. MOVA learned through weekly conference calls between OVC and the states impacted by the terrorist attacks (NY, CT, MA, PA, CA, NJ, VA) that Massachusetts is the only state to have collaborated with the local FEMA pass-through agency to access funding for victim services programs.

Beginning the week after the October training, Senator Kennedy's Office, MOVA, and DMH worked together to assign providers to every interested family. To preserve families' confidentiality, the Senator's staff agreed to contact the families themselves and offer the help of a grief counselor. Senator Kennedy's office then forwarded contact information for interested families, and MOVA and DMH assigned pro-

grams to work with them based on where families live. At present, 84 families have been assigned counselors.

In November, MOVA met with all VOCA-funded homicide bereavement and crisis response programs to discuss the statewide response to the September 11 victims. The meeting offered peer support and allowed for discussion about overlooked resources and reoccurring problems in order to ensure that victims have the necessary services. MOVA learned that programs are truly extending themselves to these families; for example, many providers are meeting with victims in their homes.

MOVA will host a training on January 23 in Worcester called "September 11th Response Training: Entitlement Programs Update & Voices From the Field" for all providers working with survivors of September 11.

Collaborating for the Future

As with other victim issues in the Commonwealth, MOVA continues to act as an information clearinghouse for resources and materials relevant to September 11. Our Victim Service Coordinator has compiled, and continues to compile, a September 11 binder, which includes extensive resource information on services for victims and related news articles helpful for victims and providers.

In the days following September 11, telephone calls and offers of help came from all corners of the Commonwealth. New and renewed partnerships remind us of our good fortune to have so many talented people in our state working toward the same end: compassion, services, rights and support for all crime victims.

"The coordinated efforts of every agency to assist people under the most difficult of situations with compassion, understanding, and dignity were laudable. This experience gave true meaning to the word 'teamwork'. We all saw, heard, felt, on occasion smelled, and were touched by the aftermath of the WTC. It was, is, and always will be a major part of my (our) life. I am thankful for this experience and truly 'proud to be an American!!'"

"It was a true pleasure to work with all of our team members...a wonderful discovery to find how well we complemented each other, how experienced the group members were, and how well we supported each other throughout our stay. To participate in some way, even briefly, was a real gift for each and every one of us. The magnitude of people's sadness and pain (in New York City) was difficult to grasp, particularly as 'outsiders'. However, this was matched by the extraordinary strength and capability we witnessed in people who are caring for each other and slowly finding ways to keep going forward."

We are keenly aware that people's lives in New York City are forever changed in both tangible and intangible ways. The individual and community trauma is far-reaching and long-term. Our work was well received and, hopefully, helpful and sustaining for those with whom we interacted. Not surprisingly, our regret was that there was so much more to do.

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Responding to Victims of Terrorism
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Written by the Massachusetts Team:

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Gift Program, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the New York City Family Assistance Center. Presenters also shared practical information around pressing issues the families faced, such as processes for providing DNA samples, obtaining death certificates, making family visits to the World Trade Center site and obtaining free legal assistance. The brochure "Information for Victims of Terrorism" developed by the Department of Justice was one of several pieces of printed material distributed to the families.

Conclusion

The terrorist attacks and their aftermath underscore the essential need for interagency partnerships in responding in an equitable and efficient manner to victims of terrorism. I encourage those involved in victim assistance and crisis response to learn from the successes and shortcomings of this recent experience. Strengthen existing relationships among federal, state and local victim assistance agencies by ensuring that written response plans and protocols are in place. Obtain a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each agency so that following the designation of a potential terrorist event as a federal investigation a victim services infrastructure can be operational as

expeditiously as possible. Reach a consensus on issues such as creating a centralized victim database, streamlining requests for services from victims and devise a mechanism to triage services requests. Prior planning is essential not only for emergency service needs, but for the interim and long-term needs of the victims. Determine how best to utilize each agency's expertise and resources so that funds and services are distributed equitably and duplication of efforts is avoided.

The Department of Justice and the U.S. Attorney's Office remain committed to serving and supporting the families affected by September 11, and to maintaining these interagency partnerships that are so essential in helping victims.

*What lies behind us and what lies
before us are tiny matters compared
to what lies within us.*

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

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Disaster Response in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community

The Wayside Training Institute will hold a training on trauma designed for deaf counselors and hearing counselors who work with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The training will take place at Plymouth Church, 87 Edgell Road, Framingham, on Friday, February 8, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Call the Wayside Youth and Family Support Network registration line at (508) 875-5419, TTY (781) 891-3956.

Program on Bereavement and Traumatic Loss

The National Center for Death Education at Mount Ida College will host a program on bereavement and traumatic loss and how to live with ongoing crisis as a part of personal and professional life. Internationally-known Israeli speakers Simon Rubin and Ruth Malkinson will present the half-day program on February 11. The registration fee will be approximately \$25. For more information, call the National Center for Death Education at (617) 928-4649.

Training: Support Groups for the Homicide Survivor

The Living After Murder Program and Omega Homicide Bereavement Services will host a one-day training on Support Groups for the Homicide Survivor. Dr. Ted Rynearson, a leader in the treatment of traumatic loss, will present on his Restorative Retelling (RR) method on Friday, February 22 from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at a location to be announced. The training is free and lunch will be provided. Please RSVP to Katherine Manners at (617) 541-3790 x733.

NOVA 2002 Train the Trainers Institute

The National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) announces a Train the Trainers Institute for individuals trained on the NOVA model of crisis response. NOVA offers a 50-hour certification class for trainers and educators. Sessions of the 2002 Certified Train the Trainers Institute will take place March 11-15 and July 22-26 in Washington D.C. Course tuition is \$700. Contact Barbara Kendall at kendallbarbara@hotmail.com (preferred) or by calling (303) 499-3749.

Massachusetts Victim Rights 2002 Conference

The Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance (MOVA) will hold its annual Victim Rights Conference on April 16 at Boston's Park Plaza Hotel. MOVA invites nominations for awards to recognize victims and professionals in the victim rights community, including advocates, legislators, media professionals and public officials. For registration information or award nomination forms, call MOVA at (617) 727-5200.



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